



## Entrenar la compasión: Enseñanzas zen para la práctica del Lojong

*Norman Fischer*

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**Entrenar la compasión: Enseñanzas zen para la práctica del Lojong** Norman Fischer  
Con sencillez y deslumbrante claridad, Norman Fischer nos ofrece un sistema de entrenamiento mental tibetano fascinante y poderoso.

Chade-Meng Tan, autor de *Busca en tu interior*

**Es posible ejercitarse la compasión y la empatía de la misma manera en que aprendemos a tocar un instrumento, hablar un idioma extranjero o practicar un deporte.**

Es a la luz de esta premisa que nace *Entrenar la compasión*, un libro didáctico que introduce al lector al extraordinario arte del entrenamiento mental Lojong: técnica budista que consiste en la repetición de mantras breves -o slogans- para alcanzar el encuentro de la compasión con la sabiduría.

En este volumen, un clásico contemporáneo de las prácticas zen adoptadas en Occidente, el autor demuestra que el Lojong es un método maravilloso para cualquiera, incluyendo aquellos que de otro modo no se sienten atraídos hacia el budismo, que no tienen tiempo ni intenciones de meditar o que simplemente quisieran dejar atrás la dispersión, la tacañería y la inconciencia para abrazar la concentración, la generosidad y la consideración.

## Entrenar la compasión: Enseñanzas zen para la práctica del Lojong Details

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## **From Reader Review Entrenar la compasión: Enseñanzas zen para la práctica del Lojong for online ebook**

### **Bodhidasa says**

A thoroughly engaging commentary on the lojong teachings. Fischer makes original and sound connections between the verses/slogans that add life to them. Having read nearly every book on the mind Trainings, I found this one renewed my practice and confidence in the teachings.

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### **Tom says**

I read this book twice during 2017. It is the best book I read this year, and I read over 50 books. Very useful in mind training to be more kind and caring, and internally free.

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### **Kelsey says**

So very many useful mindfulness lessons here. Although based on the same Tibetan teachings on compassion (Lojong) as Pema Chodron's "Start Where You Are" - which I loved - I got different things out of this book. And I plan to return to this book over and over...

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### **Patricia says**

This is a rich book and it definitely a training manual. I read it through once rather quickly and then I started over and read it again. I have memorized the Lojong slogans and I keep returning to the book to remind me of the purpose and meaning behind the one I'm considering that week or day. It is actually the 3rd book I've read about the Lojong slogans, and for me the most useful or maybe I'm just better prepared to received the information. I'm glad I read the other books (e.g Pema Chodron's Start Where you Are and Ken McLeod's Wake Up to Your Life). However, Fischer's interpretation and teaching has been just right.

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### **Julie G says**

Western philosophy frequently holds that a person is either compassionate, or not. That they can be encouraged to grow, but those who lack compassion ... well, they're simply lacking.

"Lojong is the Tibetan Buddhist practice that involves working with short phrases (called "slogans") as a way of generating bodhichitta, the heart and mind of enlightened compassion. Shambala Publications"

I could never, in a million years, begin to explain the contents of this book. Mainly, because I am still struggling to adopt and adapt, and learn. I can, however, share the very beginning - "[t]he first point of Zen mind training": Train in the preliminaries.

It was as though the sentences which follow were written for me. I would imagine many people feel the same way. To train in the preliminaries is to resolve to let go of everything that came before the moment where one begins to train. To learn that "... this is your life and you are the only one equipped to deal with it."

Powerful idea, isn't it? Let go of all that came before and find the courage to continue in a different way. To break old habits and patterns - what a freeing concept.

In Tibetan and Mahayana Buddhism, there are traditional reflections used in meditation as a way of training in the preliminaries.

*The rarity and preciousness of human life:*

When one considers the number of other creatures on the planet, the odds of molecules and DNA combining in such a way as to become human beings is pretty much a million to one - against. As such, each human life is precious.

*The inevitability of death:*

This is a concept that is difficult for much of Western society, or so it seems. If you live your life, knowing that eventually it will end, how much less significant are the issues of today, or worries about tomorrow?

*The awesome and indelible power of our actions:*

We've all heard of karma, the concept that every action produces a result. Our thoughts, actions, and words have consequences. Whether we know it or not, we are affecting the world around us. So, we ask ourselves if we wish to be a force for good or do nothing and make things worse. (Are we part of the solution or part of the problem?)

*The inescapability of suffering:*

It is inevitable, like death, that there will be loss, sorrow, and suffering in our lives. People we love die or leave us. We become ill, grow old, lose jobs, get divorced. There is no life without suffering. Doesn't it make sense that we strengthen our minds and hearts for the suffering that will someday come?

This (Train in the preliminaries) is the first of 59 'slogans' that are part of the Buddhist practice of lojong. It can take weeks or months of meditation / contemplation to grasp, to internalize, this slogan and the 4 reflections. And they are some of the most straight-forward, easily understood slogans.

Lojong is not difficult and it is not simple. It is a thousand-year-old method by which we can teach ourselves to let go of behaviors and attitudes that are damaging to ourselves and those around us. To embrace thoughts and actions and beliefs that free our hearts and our minds to love and value life, ourselves, and all living creatures.

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I do not pretend to understand half of what Zoketsu Fischer is sharing in this book. Much of it flies in the face of everything I've learned in 56 years on this planet. However, I do know that, as I add slogans to my meditative practices and attempt to embrace the teachings of lojong, I am changing in powerful ways.

Those looking for a step-by-step instruction guide to enlightenment (insert tab A into slot B) might be disappointed. One reflects, meditates, works on a specific slogan for days or weeks, only to find that the next slogan contradicts what came before. Or, worse yet, instructs the student to completely ignore the previous slogan.

As with any new skill, it takes time to break old patterns; to undo old habits. Muscles long idle must be taught the motions of the new dance. Such is the nature of learning new ideas - the muscles of the mind are resistant to new steps.

I may not get it all the first time through, but I trust Zoketsu Fischer to lead me where I need to be.

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Disclosure of Material Connection: I received a complimentary electronic galley of this book from the publisher through NetGalley.com professional readers program. I was not required to write a positive review. The opinions I have expressed are my own.

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### **Will Simpson says**

Loved reading this yet again. Third time and already looking forward to the fourth.

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### **Tanya McGinnity says**

I don't even know where to begin with writing about this book because it is ALL CAPS REMARKABLE!!!

Seriously. I have been hooting on about this book for the longest time and pretty much everyone who I speak with gets an earful from me fangirling on and on about its simple brilliance. I'm currently engaging in Lojong practice, so it arrived on my Kindle at a very auspicious time and pushed its way past the recommended books from the list of those on the suggested reading list.

A bit of background for this review and for those who judge books by their covers. No. That isn't a misprint and it does read as 'Zen Teachings on the Practice of Lojong'. Norman Fischer is a Zen priest with a background in interfaith study, teaching, practice and writing, having previously released a book titled *Opening To You: Zen-Inspired Translations of the Psalms*. The final paragraphs in this book alone featured some of the most powerful thoughts on religion and faith that I've read, but more on that later.

Now about Lojong, It's a mind training practice in the Tibetan Buddhism tradition. No. It's not anything spooky, despite the words 'mind training practice' which sound a bit like the domain of the CIA or something you'd see in an episode of The X Files. Lojong is a practice in which one studies and reflects on 59 slogans as a means to lead oneself towards compassion. Pema explains it a bit more eloquently than I do over here.

Fischer begins the book with details on how the slogans are similar to Zen koans which is a quite interesting way to view how these two traditions have much overlap. As with similar books on Lojong such as my perennial favourite, 'Training the Mind and Cultivating Loving-Kindness' by Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche, Fischer views his contribution as having written a 'training manual' and in essence, this book provides a real world approach in suggesting how the slogans can be used in a way that fit into everyday life. Written in a casual tone, Fischer's voice is friendly, instructive and overall is like hanging out with a funny and engaging spiritual friend. Again, I'm a big fan of his now and discovering him better late than never.

While the tone of the book is friendly and not too hardcore in its commentary on the subject matter (read this as it's not requiring a PhD in Buddhist Philosophy), it does offer up one of the clearest descriptions of absolute and relative bodhichitta that I've encountered. Given that the distinction between these two truths can get a bit sticky for some, I appreciate the author's clear presentation of this oft misunderstood aspect of Buddhism. That is the beauty of the author's approach in that he helps to make complex topics a bit less blurry.

Fischer is very perceptive about human nature and our motivations and delivers matter-of-fact teachings on the human condition. He deftly weaves teachings and quotes from Zen and Tibetan masters along with his own personal perspectives within the book in a way which contributes an exciting blend of past and modern approaches and insights on the Dharma.

This book is unique in that it is a Zen priest's commentator on an Indo-Buddhist text and a new flavour of Buddhism added to the mix. While wearing different coloured robes and with a background in Zen, the author is able to convey the key points of compassion which Lojong aims to inspire in those who encounter it. The book is gentle, humorous and feels like meeting a friendly guide on the path. As my first introduction to the work of Norman Fischer, I am now finding myself wanting to experiment with his interfaith perspective as a means to explore my spiritual side a bit further as it relates to a different school entirely. Zenbetan? Tibzen? Who knows?

What is known is that this is certainly now one of my go-to Dharma books and I'll continue to recommend it highly to everyone who's willing to listen to me!

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### **Dana says**

Another for my read again pile!!

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### **Frank Jude says**

Lojong is a Tibetan Buddhist teaching and practice of mind training. There are seven "points" of training and a total of 59 slogans. It can be a powerful practice: one focuses on a slogan or group of slogans, contemplating them in meditation and then working with them throughout the day. There are slogans that focus on the deeper wisdom teachings of emptiness ("See everything as a dream," "Examine the nature of awareness") as well as specific meditation instructions ("Practice sending and receiving alternatively on the breath") to succinct reminders and advice ("Don't be a phony," "Don't be so predictable," "Examine and Analyze").

As a Tibetan practice and teaching, the only texts had been offered by teachers within the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, such as Trungpa Rinpoche, Pema Chodron, Gakpa Rinpoche and others. And for some, the traditional Tibetan perspective hasn't always seemed relevant. Slogans such as "Seeing confusion as the four kayas is unsurpassable shunyata protection" and "The mahayana instruction for ejection of consciousness at death is the five strengths; how you conduct yourself is important" might even cause some eye rolls.

This is where Norman Fischer's book sub-titled "Zen Teachings on the Practice of Lojong" can come in handy. With typical down-to-earth, simple and clear zen perspective, Fischer offers a fresh, contemporary

and useful entry into this powerful mind-training without watering it down in any way. As such, it also offers a corrective to the zen buddhist lack of training in compassion (despite all the zen rhetoric about compassion). For instance, the two slogans I mention in the preceding paragraph are glossed as "See confusion as Buddha and practice emptiness" and "Practice for death as well as for life."

In the contemporary buddhist world, a reduced, stripped-down practice promulgated as "mindfulness" has become very popular. It soothes practitioners with the soft-sell of a kind of "bare attention" that devalues cognition while focusing on "feeling" and the inducement to let go of "judgments," and "evaluations." The whole point of practice, however, is to grow in wise discernment which requires engaged examination and analysis -- just as one of the Lojong slogans exhorts.

I am delighted to have this book as a resource to recommend to my students and as a user-friendly way to engage in this life-changing practice.

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### **Alicia Grega says**

I will continue reading this book for years to come. Its usefulness is inexhaustible. Wonderful to read bits at a time over time and then return to, re-reading passages that illuminate the areas that demand attention in your life at that time. Fischer's writing is so clean and easy to digest yet still inspiring and without pretension. Reading him is like discovering a dear confidant whom you always prayed quietly to find but were afraid might not exist.

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### **Clara says**

Arriving by way of a friend's recommendation with no other knowledge of Lojong, I found author's style approachable and easy-going, but serious in intent. Though I didn't set out to take up this kind of mind training, I have a feeling I'll be referring back to this book and using what of it I can recall until then.

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### **Les Moore says**

4.5

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### **David Guy says**

This is Norman Fischer's take on the Tibetan teachings of Lojong. I actually thought this book was better than Trungpa's book on the same subject. Fischer has a lot of wisdom about practice and about life, and he writes very well.

I don't really like spiritual slogans, but these are interesting, and mostly involve moving in the direction of your suffering, rather than avoiding it. Some seem initially incomprehensible, but Fischer makes sense of them.

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### **Renee Legris says**

Mr. Fischer makes these teachings so accessible and so clear! The lojong slogans are both inspiring and practical. I can see I will be revisiting this book on a regular basis over the years.

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### **culley says**

The less control we have over our thoughts and emotions the more we are enslaved to our impulses. No one is in complete control, of course, but many people don't even apply much effort to control themselves. Lojong means training the mind. The study of lojong, usually by rote memorization, journaling or just thinking about the aphorisms regularly, should allow us to gain greater control over our thoughts and emotions. For instance, mental tools that help us stick to our resolutions are particularly valuable and precisely demonstrate the power of having control over our minds. There are 59 lojong slogans— 59 tools we can employ to gain greater control over our emotions. Tool usage helps differentiate us from the other animal of the earth! I like tools.

With the influence of this book I found the strength to leave my marriage, begin a yoga practice and quit my habit of boozing it up daily. While it is safe to assume that I started reading the book at just the right time, I also think the book has substantial merit. It is clearly written and down to earth. I think this book, especially the first slogan, could be useful in changing or starting any habit. The aphorism about blame is very accessible and life changing if we can develop an awareness of when we start to cultivate the stance of a victim. Blame is a masochistic, self-destructive act. Our ability to deal with adverse circumstances and situations should change as a result of studying this book. Cheaper than therapy.

I chose to read this book slowly, it took me over a year, and I journal about each slogan as a way to internalize it. Next I plan on memorizing the slogans and hopefully develop some nervous tick style reflexive behavior by recalling the slogans at appropriate moments. We'll see. I also want to read additional lojong books for comparison. The author has completely reworded most of the slogans. This is helpful for the most part, but it could make it more difficult to talk with others, or to reference other material.

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